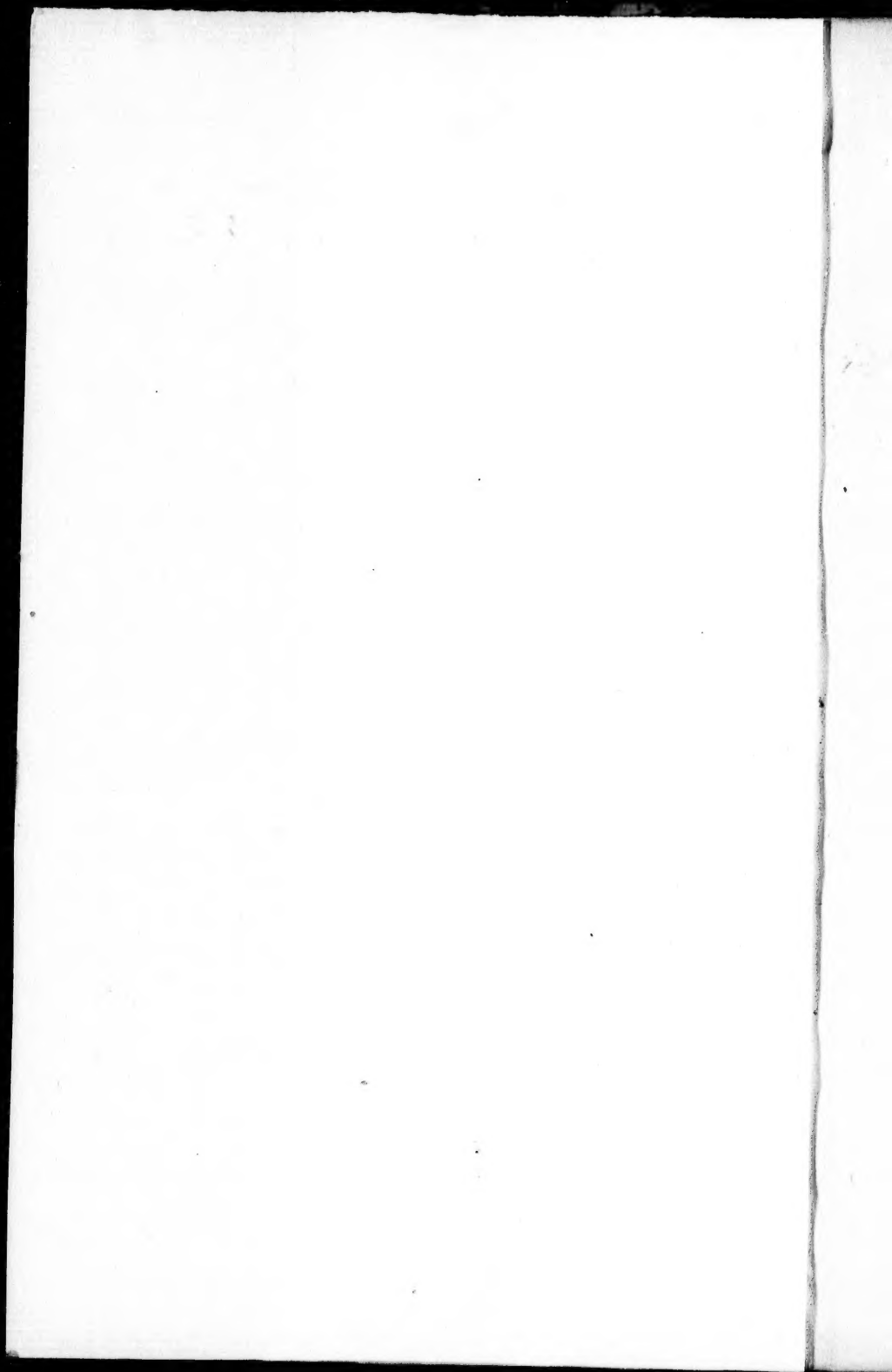




"Jesus Christ and Him Crucified:"

A SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY NOV. 27, 1853, AFTER HIS
INSTALLATION,

BY

JOHN JENKINS,

MINISTER OF THE CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADA.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY ISAAC ASHMEAD.

MONTREAL: B. DAWSON.

1853.

✓

A SERMON.

"I DETERMINED NOT TO KNOW ANYTHING AMONG YOU, SAVE JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED."—1 *Corinthians*, ii. 2.

A MERELY literary student of the New Testament who should read this determination without knowing which of the apostles was its author, would suspect any one of them rather than Paul. To him, it would sound more like the utterance of an unlettered fisherman, than like that of a finished scholar whose privilege it had been to sit at the feet of Gamaliel. It would puzzle him to know why a man of letters and of taste, a man, moreover, of more than usually intellectual eminence, and thoroughly versed in the various systems of philosophy which were then prevalent, should have come to so extraordinary a conclusion; especially when he considered that the apostle was addressing educated Greeks. If, through lack of early literary advantages and present intellectual vigour, he had been driven to the necessity of harping upon one subject, it would not have been so surprising to our literary friend, but it lies beyond

the compass of his natural reason to understand, why that doctrine of Christianity, which of all others is clothed with greatest shame, which was an offence to the Jew, which was foolishness to the Greek, should be selected by a man whom every one acknowledges to have been intellectually great, as the all-absorbing theme of his ministrations. Yet, so it was: "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Who will deny that there are men in our own day who thus argue? If a minister express and fulfil a resolution equivalent to that of the text; if, in his ministrations, he is accustomed to give prominence to the necessity of a Saviour, to the divinity of Christ, to the humanity and condescension of Christ, to the sacrifice and atonement of Christ; if he is wont to impart a *Christ-ian* hue to all his expositions and predilections; if it is his habit to constitute Christ the sole centre of his theology, of his morals, of his philosophy; there are not wanting those who are ready to pronounce him unlettered and unfurnished. In their estimation, the educated minister, the man of talent, of taste and of reading, the man who is "up with the age," will not be ever dwelling upon evangelical themes; he

will diversify his preaching with essays on morality, and even on abstruse questions in metaphysics; he will charm the ears of the *litterati* of his congregation with speculations in philosophy; he will come before them with "excellency of speech" and will instruct them through the medium of "enticing words of man's wisdom." Unhappily, ministers, ambassadors of Christ, who at their ordination solemnly vowed to be "zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel," have pandered to the miserable taste of the day, and have neglected Christ and their hearers' salvation. In their attempts to be refined and philosophical, they have failed to be faithful and evangelical.

We would not advocate a style of preaching which like the railroad train, maintains one undeviating track; which confines itself to one set of phrases and employs but one class of illustrations; that *se-saw* preaching (if you will allow me the use of a vulgar phrase,) which fastens upon one or two favorite doctrines, and never expands itself to embrace the varied glories and beauties, the endless varieties of evangelical truth. Those who imagine Paul to have adopted such a course, misunderstand both the apostle and the Gospel. What meant he when he exclaimed, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified?" Was it that he would neglect other

truths? that he would forget to expound the nature of God, or the duties of man? that he would avoid discussions in moral law and in moral philosophy? No! He rather meant to assert that *the doctrine of Christ Jesus crucified is the grand, central doctrine of all religion.*

This is the subject to which I have resolved to draw your attention this evening. It is only fitting that, in this the first discourse I preach to you after my installation as your minister, I should distinctly announce the principles upon which I propose to base my public ministration amongst you; that I should declare what teaching you are to expect from this sacred desk, and what you are not to expect. It is right that I should disclose the vein which will run through my expositions of the word of God, that I should unfold the hue which I purpose on all occasions to impart to them. I can truly say, that when I came to you four Sabbaths ago, I determined, should arrangements be completed for my settlement among you, to preach only Christ; I determined, by the help of God's grace, to become an unworthy follower of the great apostle, and to "know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." If any persons are expecting that here, man, fallen and corrupt man, will be represented as possessing an inherent power of saving his own soul, any power at all, indeed,

which he has not derived from the grace of Christ, and from the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit, they will be wholly deceived. Equally mistaken will they be who imagine that I have consented to occupy this sacred desk for the purpose of contracting the glory and the grace of Christ by preaching any other than a free and a full Gospel. God forbid that I should ever be found detracting from the grace and efficacy—from the *infinitude* of the atonement, by limiting its extent! Not less disappointed will they be who suppose that I have come amongst you to preach series after series of elaborately wrought discourses for the purpose of drawing together only the *élite* of a neighborhood, and so of building up a fashionable congregation. Those who look for such things will not find them here. Those, moreover, who seek for the settlement of nice theological questions, or of still nicer ecclesiastical claims, who expect erudite exegeses of controverted texts, or labored disquisitions in the metaphysics of theology, will not find them here; this is not the fountain from which will flow such streams as these. Our motto is, “A PLAIN GOSPEL FOR ALL CLASSES;”—for rich and poor, for intellectual and simple, for educated and illiterate;—ONE GOSPEL for the graduate in arts, and the child in the Sunday School;—one Gospel for ALL.

We return from this digression to repeat the as-

sertion which we just now based upon the text,—that the doctrine of a crucified Jesus is the central orb of the Christian system upon which its every other doctrine is suspended, and to which its every other doctrine is attracted. You cannot find me a single truth in our religion which does not draw its light, its beauty, its power, from the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The several doctrines of religion hang around the glorious cross, as the planetary orbs hang around the sun; they are bright, because they are connected with the cross; they illuminate our dark hearts because they borrow their light from the cross; they are harmonious, because the mighty cross,—that vast orb of truth, “Christ and him crucified,”—causes them, by its gravitating power to pursue undeviatingly their respective circuits in the system of truth. Let me furnish two or three illustrations:

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD’S NATURE, if I may so express myself, is a leading doctrine of religion. It is indeed the primary lesson in the communication of religious knowledge. To know God in his attributes; to apprehend the glory, the purity, the benignity of his character; so to apprehend his nature as that our hearts and our actions shall be legitimately influenced by our convictions of its supreme holiness, is a chief part of religion. Where am I to acquire this knowledge? To what

instructor am I to apply for the fullest acquaintance with the Divine character which it is possible to obtain in this world? Shall I go to creation, to the magnificent works of God's hands by which I am surrounded? I will not be slow to confess that I see much here which illustrates the nature of God. Those everlasting hills, those rocks of granite the pillars of our earth, tell me of His power; those vast and impenetrable forests, those unfathomable seas proclaim that He is omnipotent. I learn from these His eternal power and Godhead. I take up a shell from the beach or a twig from the forest, or a simple leaf as it strays away from its parent branch, and I see enough to tell me that the Creator is infinite in wisdom. I mark the rich provisions of nature in the changes of the seasons, in the distillations of the dew, in the descent of the rains, in the intervention of the clouds, and I learn lessons in God's infinite benevolence. And when I look above and survey those beauteous orbs of light which an infinite intelligence has hung up in the heavens, I say with David, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work." But is this *all* that I can know of God? There is yet within my heart a void which is not filled; there are yet cravings in this immortal part which this knowledge does not satisfy; my conscience tells me that I am a sinner; my

conscience suggests to me a question which nature in its varied glory and bounty has not yet answered ; it is this : " How can I, as a sinner, meet an all-powerful, an all-righteous, an all-wise, or even an infinitely benevolent Being ?" The book of nature cannot tell me. There is not a sun that shines in any one of the innumerable systems with which the heavens are studded, that can tell me. The highest mountain that rears its head towards God's dwelling place is silent here. I go in vain to the shores of either the wild Atlantic or the broad Pacific for an answer to the question. Is there then nothing more to be known of God ? Must my troubled conscience remain in suspense, in despondency, yea even in despair ? " No ! I may know more of God. He has given me another book besides the book of nature. He has given me this Bible of Revelation ; I open its pages. I find that it does not contradict, but that it confirms the utterances of the Bible of nature. I find here, too, that " a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He,"—that He is " glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ;" but I find also other disclosures of the Divine character. I here read, that He is " the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness ;" and if you ask me where I find the brightest display of this wonderful attribute of the Divine character, upon what leaf

in this large volume I learn most of God's mercy to sinners, I reply, upon that leaf whose lines I read out to you this evening, that leaf which contains the wonderful story of the cross,—of Christ, the God-man, bleeding, agonizing, expiring upon the cross.—It is here I learn that "God is love." It is upon Calvary, in the midst of its murderous scenes, that I see how God can be "just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Not only, then, do I discover the infinite compassion of the Divine Being when I gaze upon the crucified Son of God, but I learn also his infinite purity and his unbending justice. The thunderings of Sinai even, give no such impressive lessons of the Divine righteousness and truth, as the groans of the Son of God on Calvary. When I read the words which Jehovah inscribed upon the tables of the Decalogue, I am filled with reverence of the Divine purity, but I seem to be inspired with a yet deeper feeling of awe when I listen to that mysterious utterance of Christ upon the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

"Part of thy name divinely stands
On all thy creatures writ,
They show the labour of thy hands,
Or impress of thy feet.

"But when we view thy strange design
To save rebellious worms;
There vengeance and compassion join,
In their divinest forms,

"Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess,
Which of the glories brighter shone,
The justice or the grace."

If then, in the course of my ministrations, I shall have to speak to you of the glory of the Divine character; if I am to present to your contemplation the endless perfections of the Supreme Being; if I am to exhibit God in his purity, in his wisdom, in his power, in his mercy; and if I am to show the undivided harmony in which these perfections concentrate in Him, you will see that I can only do this within the region of Calvary, only by adhering to the determination of the apostle, "not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN, if I may so express myself, of man's nature, of man's relation to God, of man's wants, of man's destiny, is another principal doctrine of religion. Indeed, you could not supply a more comprehensive definition of what religion is than to say, that it is a knowledge of God in his character and his requirements; and a knowledge of man's self in his nature, his relations, and his duties.

But where am I to know what man is? Shall I subject him to a metaphysical anatomy? I learn from this the phenomena of his mind; I gather what are its powers and its susceptibilities; I mark

its sensations and its internal affections. But how does this help me to arrive at a *religious* view of man's nature? Again: By observation and experiment I learn that the mind of man is corrupt, that it is thoroughly disordered, that he is not living so as to secure the favour of a holy God, but this knowledge does not reveal to me either the origin or the nature of sin. It was ignorance of this truth that constituted man the most difficult problem which the ancient philosophers had to solve; man as they found him; man who saw the right, who acknowledged the excellence of virtue and the perniciousness of vice, and yet pursued the wrong; man for whose guidance and restraint they concocted whole systems of moral philosophy, whose laws he as speedily infringed. By my process of anatomy I also discover some imperfect traces of immortality, but they are so obscure that it becomes difficult to determine whether the mind is annihilated at death or lives for ever. Where can I obtain a knowledge of man? Only in the word of God. Here I learn the circumstances and design of his creation. Here I read of his fearful fall from rectitude and from God. Here is revealed to me the heinous character of sin. Here I am informed of the certain consequences of sin. Here God hath revealed his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Here I discover the immortality

of man's destiny; and there is no light in which I read these truths so clearly as the light of the cross. It is when I survey the infinite character of Christ's sacrifice, that I begin to apprehend the evil of sin. It is when I see the Eternal Son of God humbling himself unto death, that I begin to appreciate the true value of man. It is here, on the cross, it is by the doctrine of Christ Jesus and him crucified, that "life and immortality are brought to light." If, then, I am to teach you lessons in humanity; if I am to disclose to you the sinfulness of man's nature; if I am to unfold the value of the human soul; if it will be my duty to remind you frequently of man's high and holy destiny, and if I am to discourse of God's mindful regard of the human race, you will agree with me that I shall do all this most effectually by determining "not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

But it will be well for us to follow out a little more closely, one branch of this subject. I have spoken of man's fall and of his destiny; these suggest a consideration of his spiritual wants. By his estrangement from God, I learn man's need of reconciliation; by the sinfulness of his nature, I learn his need of regeneration; by the immortality of his destiny, I learn his need of eternal redemption. These three blessings exhaust the catalogue of human necessities. But where am I to gain a know-

which I
 e cross.
 Christ's
 l of sin.
 umbling
 ate the
 it is by
 ed, that
 t." If,
 y; if I
 an's na-
 an soul;
 ently of
 to dis-
 an race,
 his most
 anything
 fied."
 a little
 I have
 ese sug-
 By his
 d of re-
 I learn
 y of his
 mption.
 gue of
 know-

ledge of them? of these doctrines of reconciliation, and renewal, and eternal life? these doctrines of "righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?" We have already shown you that on these subjects, nature maintains an unbroken silence; it is equally evident that uninspired history casts not a ray upon them; and as to tradition, its light is so feeble as to make the darkness more obscure and the path less certain. To whom then shall I go for instruction in these things, but to God in his revealed Word? And where, in the revelations of God but in the Gospel, and where in the Gospel, but in the doctrine of Christ crucified am I to find a perfect disclosure of these, to me, momentous truths? "Lord, to whom should we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

We will attempt a yet more practical consideration of these truths. Estrangement from God will be the natural condition of every man, woman and child who may sit under the ministry of the Word in this sanctuary. Every one, therefore, will need personal reconciliation with God. What, then, have I to do, as a Christian ambassador, but to direct every man to the Cross, to Christ Jesus and him crucified? It will be at my peril to know any thing in this matter but Christ. What have I to do but to proclaim to every one who will consent to listen to my voice, "On the cross the Lamb of God was

slain for thy sins, and for the sins of the whole world ; on that cross the handwriting that was against thee, that long, black catalogue of personal sins was nailed in triumph by thy Lord ; on that cross thy Redeemer acquired the right to dispense to every man the blessings of repentance and forgiveness, and by that cross, God the offended, and thou the offender, may be reconciled ? By Jesus Christ and him crucified, the Divine Being may maintain the claims of his justice and yet extend mercy to sinful thee." It is thus, dear brethren, that we propose, by God's blessing, to know nothing among you in the reconciliation of the sinner, but our crucified and glorious, our merciful and exalted Jesus ;

"Only Jesus will we know,
And Jesus crucified."

And because every one who comes to this house to worship will possess a heart wholly corrupt and polluted, and will therefore need the gift and blessing of a holy renewal, I see additional reason for carrying out this Apostolic determination. What can effectually touch that polluted spirit ? What can wash away those crimson stains but the blood of a crucified Jesus ? Ah ! I see in that precious blood an efficacy so vast, as that it could now make as white as snow every sinful spirit in this house ; "in this house," did I say ? Yea, in this whole

world! Whither then, but to the cross; whither, but to the fountain-side of Jesus which was opened for sin and for uncleanness, should I lead you for sanctification unto life? "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." God forbid that I should know any thing among you in your sanctification, save "Jesus Christ and him crucified!"

But man is immortal, and needs, therefore, more than reconciliation and sanctification; he needs endless salvation. This will be the need of every man whom it shall be my lot to address. Whither then shall I lead him? By what means shall I encourage him to hope that eternal life will be the lot of every faithful and persevering believer? I still adhere to Paul's determination, "not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Do I need salvation unto life eternal? When I gaze upon the Son of God hanging on the cross, and see him bowing his head, and with the last, lingering, expiring cry of "IT IS FINISHED," giving up the ghost, it is then I learn that my salvation is completed, that the work is finished, and that my gracious Saviour hath obtained eternal redemption for me. I look upon the cross, and I see it so radiant with the Father's love, that I am encouraged to exclaim, "He that spared not his own Son, but freely gave up him for us all, how

shall he not with him also freely give" us redemption unto life? I see myself a vile and sinful enemy at the foot of the cross, and when I am accepted through its sacrifice, I am emboldened to say, "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved through his life."

I have spoken of man's wants; but religion contemplates also man's obligations. And here I might show you how great a power the sanctions of morality receive from the doctrine of "Jesus Christ and him crucified." I might remind you of the rigorous demands of the Divine law exemplified by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. I might point out to you that matchless combination of purity and obedience which resided in the Saviour of men, and which constituted him a perfect example of morality. And I might speak of that inward moral strength which is communicated to all those who heartily believe the doctrine of Christ crucified—that sanctifying living power which leads to obedience and practical holiness. Christ crucified and practical sanctification are joined by indissoluble bonds. How beautifully, how expressively is this presented to us by the author of my text, in his Epistle to the Galatians: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus

Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

These are themes on which one might discourse for hours, but I must not detain you. You have heard enough to convince you that when the Apostle determined not to know any thing among the Corinthians "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," it was a determination worthy of him as a man of lofty intellect and of enlarged mental culture; that it was worthy of him both as a philosopher and as a Christian. What else did he determine but to disclose to the Corinthians all that was desirable to them as intellectual, and all that was valuable to them as immortal beings? What else, but to dwell upon a subject which is inclusive of every other subject worthy of man's attention. When the Apostle thus determined, he hit upon a course which, however repulsive at first, proved eventually most attractive; for there is no doctrine which so effectually draws men's hearts towards religion as the love of God, and there is no exhibition of the infinite love of God so brilliant, so impressive, so overwhelmingly attractive, as that which is furnished by the dying of the Lord Jesus. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Brethren, you will have to bear with me yet a little longer. This is an occasion of no common interest

either to you or to me. I no longer address you as a visitor and a stranger, but I address you as your pastor, as one who has been placed over you by the Church in the Lord, and who is expected to watch for your souls as one who must give an account. I cannot but feel that the responsibilities which I have undertaken are of the most fearfully momentous character, and that unless I am assisted by your prayers, countenanced by your efforts, and cheered by your brotherly kindness, I shall fail in accomplishing the end which I have in view, the glory of God and the salvation of your souls. I may be permitted to say that I feel no misgivings in this respect; the more, that I possess within me the confident assurance that our Great Lord will vouchsafe his aid and presence. I will further say, that my confidence in the power of simple Gospel truth is unbounded. I believe that in exact proportion to a plain, earnest, faithful presentation of the truth "as it is in Jesus," will be the success of a minister's labours. The Lord will help us and we shall not be confounded, if minister and people faithfully adhere to this apostolic determination. If, in this pulpit, nothing is known but Jesus Christ and him crucified; if in the lecture room, we still know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; if in the Sabbath-school, superintendents and teachers know nothing among the children but Jesus Christ

and him crucified; if in the prayer meeting, we go on thus cleaving to the doctrine of a crucified Jesus; if in transacting the business of the session the elders determine not to know any thing but Jesus Christ and him crucified; if in the domestic circle, amid the charms of home, and in the sick room, amid the chastenings of sorrow, and in the friendly visit, amid the hospitalities of society, *Christ crucified be ALL IN ALL*, then may we expect the blessing of God upon this enterprise. But let Christ be forgotten or even neglected, let us set up in his royal stead man or church, sect or party, sacrament or orders, we may at once begin to inscribe on these walls an indelible Ichabod.

We have spoken of the future, we have told you of our determination in respect of the future, but let me not forget the danger to some of you of overlooking the present. What is it to many of you that *in the future* Christ and him crucified will alone be known amongst us? Some of you are aged and infirm, and you cannot therefore possibly enjoy many opportunities of hearing the truth from this pulpit; others are strangers, who will not statedly worship with us; others, it may be, are about to remove to distant portions of this continent, and may never again hear this voice; and it is a solemn thought, that in reference to some who do not belong to any of these classes, there is every

probability that death will shortly remove you beyond the sphere of our influence. Then is it of vital moment that I should not delay for even seven days to sneak to every unconverted person in this assembly, concerning the salvation of his soul; that I should appeal to you in the language of earnest and affectionate remonstrance respecting the danger of farther delay. It will be nought to you, if the most faithful sermons that ever distinguished any pulpit be preached here next month, or next year, or in any subsequent time, if you do not hear them, or if you are shortly to be called away to God, and unprepared too. And then, in reference to others who, for years to come, will enjoy the privileges of this Church, it is important for you to remember that in proportion to your resistance of Christ, that in proportion to the steeling, hardening process which is going on within, will be the likelihood of your resisting Christ to the end. In view of all these considerations, I cannot dismiss you without pointing you to the cross, and saying "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." I feel that of all others, this is the doctrine which is calculated to humble you, to make you penitent, to make you feel the fearful character of iniquity. I ask yourselves, indeed, if in view of a suffering Jesus, your hearts are not melted, what other sight will be likely to soften you? Not surely the flames of per-

dition! If Calvary will not *draw* you to God, Sinai, I fear, will not *drive* you. But I trust in God that there are some here this night, especially among the young, whose hearts are subdued into tenderness and grief, who feel that they are sinners, whose spirits have been broken into penitence by the Divine Spirit of Christ. How then can I so effectually supply comfort to the wounded sinner as by pouring into his breast the balm of the Gospel? For you, the doctrine of all others necessary to your consolation is this doctrine of the cross; it is in Christ Jesus and him crucified, that you will find ease from the burden of sin, and with full confidence in the truth of the promise, I say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

O my fellow sinners, suffer me to bring you to the cross. Will you not leave your sins? Will you not forsake the world? Will you not abandon the city of destruction and turn your sinful hearts to the cross? Will you yet refuse the invitations of mercy, the pleadings of infinite pity which are now falling upon your ears from the Gospel: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out."

Could I hope by any additional argument, by any further exhibition of truth, by any more urgent appeal, to influence your minds in favour of the

Gospel, I would yet stand here for hours and pray you in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God." But I must dismiss you to your homes. Read there the story of the cross, and if you find yourselves still relentless, read it again, and again, and may the Holy Spirit, for it is his work, give you "REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE !"

THE END.

l pray
God."

Read
your-
n, and
e you